

DEATHS IN THE UK REGULAR ARMED FORCES 2006

INTRODUCTION

30 March 2007

Theme: Other - Defence

Issued by
Defence Analytical Services
Agency (DASA)
Ensleigh
Bath
BA1 5AB

Enquiries
Press Office: 020 721 83253
Statistical enquiries:
Nick Blatchley
Deputy Director DASA Health
Tel 01225 468456
nick.blatchley@dasa.mod.uk

Internet
[http://www.dasa.mod.uk/
natstats/natstatsindex.html](http://www.dasa.mod.uk/natstats/natstatsindex.html)

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- This National Statistical Notice provides summary statistics on deaths in 2006 among the UK regular Armed Forces, and trends over the 10 year period, 1997-2006.
- The information shown has been compiled from data held by the Defence Analytical Services Agency (DASA) on 9 March 2007.
- The data are presented for the Naval Service (Royal Navy and Royal Marines), the Army (including the Gurkhas), the Royal Air Force, and on a Tri-Service basis (**Table 1** and **Figure 1**).
- This notice also provides information on the major categories of cause of death for 2006 (**Table 2** and **Figure 2**).
- Several changes have been made in the presentation of data from previous years. As the Brigade of Gurkhas is part of the regular Army this Notice has been amended to include both the numbers of deaths for Gurkhas and the age-standardised rates (**Table 1**). In line with National Statistics protocols, data provided in the previous versions of this Notice have been updated and presented in the same format in the section '**Changes to previously published data**'.
- For data on suicide, this Notice includes both coroner-confirmed suicides and open verdict deaths in line with the definition used by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in the publication of National Statistics. These data are published in more detail in DASA's separate Statistical Notice, "Suicide and Open Verdict deaths in the UK regular Armed Forces 1984-2006", also released on 30 March 2007.
- Details of the data sources and the methods used to collect and analyse the data and additional information are described in the section '**Methods**'.

KEY POINTS

- In 2006, a total of 190 deaths occurred among the UK regular Armed Forces, of which 33 were serving in the Naval Service, 109 in the Army, and 48 in the RAF.
- The overall age and gender standardised mortality rate for the regular Armed Forces in 2006 was 96 per 100,000 strength. The mortality rate in the Naval Service was 84, the Army 93 and the RAF 83 per 100,000 strength.
- During the 10-year period 1997-2006, the overall Armed Forces age and gender standardised mortality rates fluctuated between a low of 66 per 100,000 in 1999 to a high of 96 per 100,000 in 2006.
- In 2006, accidents accounted for 95 deaths (50% of all deaths) in the regular Armed Forces.
- The single largest cause of death was land transport accidents, accounting for 59 deaths (31% of all deaths) in the regular Armed Forces.
- In 2006, 33 regular Service personnel were killed in action and 14 died of wounds as a result of deployment in Iraq or Afghanistan (25% of all deaths).

Report Documentation Page				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
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1. REPORT DATE 30 MAR 2007		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED 00-00-2007 to 00-00-2007	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Deaths in the UK regular armed forces 2006				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) DASA (Defence Analytical Services Agency), Ensleigh, Bath, BA1 5AB, UK, , ,				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT This National Statistic Notice provides summary statistics on deaths in 2006 among the UK regular Armed Forces, and trends over the 10 year period 1997-2006.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Public Release	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 8	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

RESULTS

Overall numbers and rates

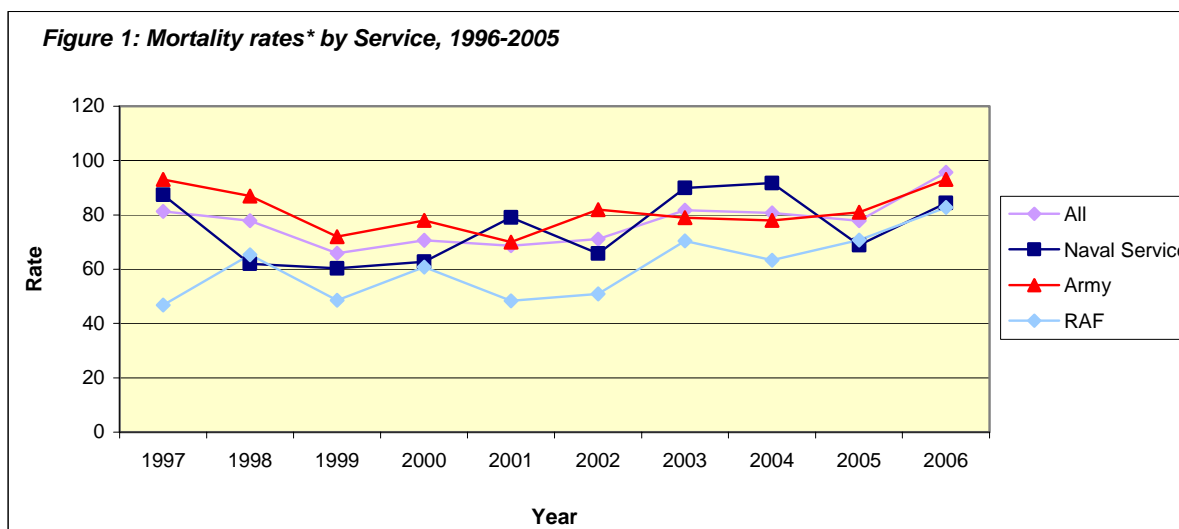
- **Table 1** provides details of the number of deaths, together with the corresponding standardised mortality rates by Service for the 10 year period, 1997-2006.
- In 2006, there were 190 deaths in the regular Armed Forces. Of these, 33 deaths were in the Naval Service, 109 in the Army and 48 in the RAF.

Table 1: Deaths in the regular Armed Forces: Year of occurrence by Service, numbers and rates*, 1997-2006

Year	All		Naval Service		Army		RAF	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
1997	164	81	39	87	92	r 93	33	47
1998	165	78	26	62	97	r 87	42	65
1999	141	66	26	60	83	r 72	32	49
2000	147	71	25	63	88	78	34	61
2001	142	69	33	79	80	r 70	29	48
2002	147	71	26	66	94	r 82	27	51
2003	173	82	37	90	97	r 79	39	70
2004	169	81	37	92	95	r 78	37	63
2005	158	78	27	69	91	r 81	40	71
2006	190	96	33	84	109	93	48	83

*Rates have been age and gender standardised to the 2005 Armed Forces population and are expressed per 100,000 strength
 'r' indicates a change in previously published data to reflect the inclusion of deaths to personnel in the Brigade of Gurkhas

- **Figure 1** illustrates recent changes in overall mortality rates by Service.



* Rates have been age and gender standardised to the 2005 Armed Forces population and are expressed per 100,000 strength

- In 2003 and 2004 there were increases in the number of deaths in the Naval Service due to 3 helicopter incidents involving multiple deaths during operations in the Middle East. In 2006 there was one incident involving multiple fatalities when two Royal Marines died, however, another six Royal Marines and one Navy personnel died on operations in separate incidents.
- The increase in the RAF mortality rate from 63 per 100,000 in 2004 to 71 per 100,000 in 2005 was accounted for by a Hercules crash in Iraq in January 2005 which claimed the lives of 9 RAF personnel. The similar increase from 71 to 83 per 100,000 in 2006 was accounted for by the loss of 12 RAF personnel in a Nimrod crash in Afghanistan in September 2006.
- The increase in Army fatality rates from 81 per 100,000 in 2005 to 93 per 100,000 in 2006 was mainly accounted for by operations in Iraq and Afghanistan which resulted in 44 lives lost (37 as a result of hostile action), compared to 14 lives lost (12 as a result of hostile action) in 2005.

- As several deaths occurred in the same incident on several occasions during the 10 year period 1997-2006 (e.g. air transport incidents), **Table 2** provides details of the number of separate incidents and the number of individual deaths, by year of occurrence, for all accidental and violent deaths excluding any suicides.

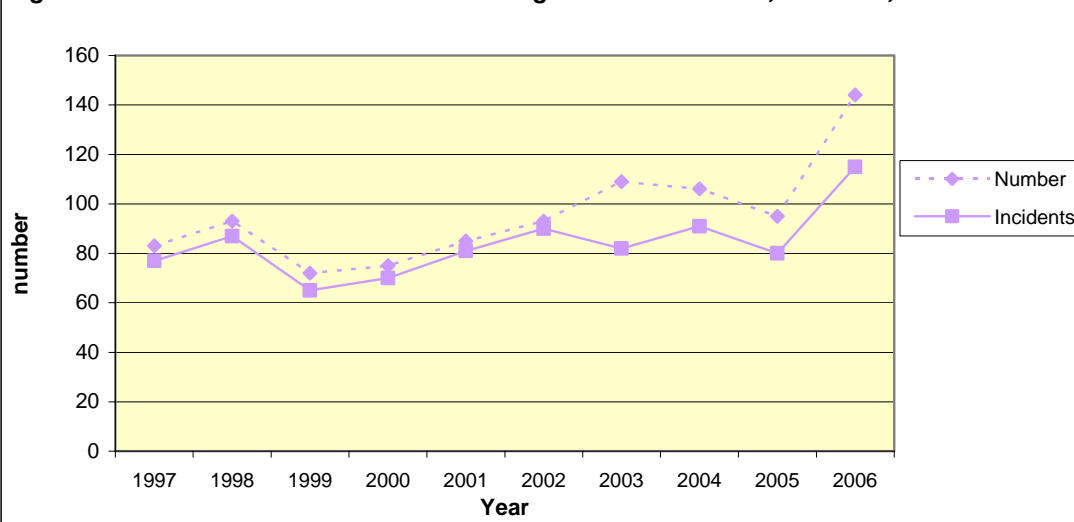
Table 2: Accidental and violent deaths (excluding suicides): Number of deaths and number of incidents by Service, 1997-2006

Year	All		Naval Service		Army		RAF	
	Number	Incidents*	Number	Incidents	Number	Incidents	Number	Incidents
1997	83	77	19	18	53	48	11	11
1998	93	87	14	14	57	52	22	21
1999	72	65	13	13	46	41	13	11
2000	75	70	14	14	48	45	13	11
2001	85	81	18	17	52	50	15	15
2002	93	90	13	12	63	61	17	17
2003	109	82	27	17	63	49	19	17
2004	106	91	16	13	73	62	17	16
2005	95	80	13	13	63	57	19	11
2006	144	115	23	21	91	82	30	18

*In some instances, personnel from more than one Service have been killed in the same incident, therefore, the data for single Services may not add up to the total provided in the 'All incidents' column.

- Table 2** shows small annual variations in the number of fatal incidents during the 9-year period, 1997-2005. In 2006, there were 115 fatal incidents representing an increase of 44% from 80 in 2005.
- 39 of the 115 fatal incidents in 2006 occurred in Iraq and Afghanistan accounting for 67 deaths. This compares to 10 fatal incidents in Iraq and Afghanistan (accounting for 22 deaths) in 2005.
- In 2006 there were 76 non-operational fatal incidents (accounting for 77 deaths) compared to 70 non-operational fatal incidents (accounting for 73 deaths) in 2005.
- This is illustrated in **Figure 2**, which shows both the annual changes in the number of deaths and the incidents for the total Armed Forces population.

Figure 2: Deaths and fatal incidents in the regular Armed Forces, numbers, 1996-2005



- In the four year period, 2003-2006, five incidents involving multiple deaths occurred in the Middle East accounting for the deaths of 44 individuals. In the same time period, there were two other incidents involving the deaths of 10 Service personnel that were not linked to the deployment in the Middle East. Six of these seven incidents involved aircraft.

Cause of death information

- **Table 3** provides a breakdown of the main causes of death for the Armed Forces as a whole and for the single Services.

Table 3: Deaths in the regular Armed Forces: Causes by Service, numbers and rates*, 2006

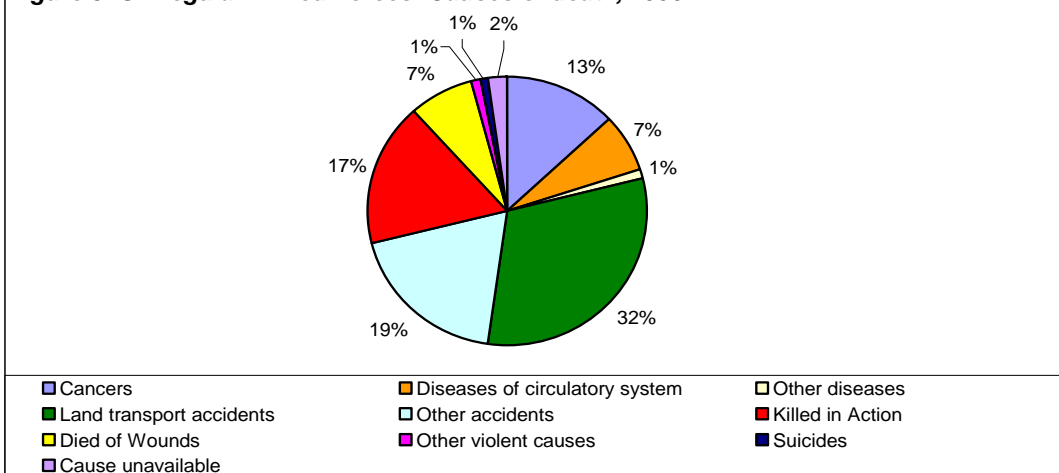
Cause	All		Naval Service		Army		RAF	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
All	190	96	33	84	109	93	48	84
Disease-related conditions	40	20	9	21	14	14	17	26
Cancers	25	13	5	12	8	8	12	19
Diseases of the circulatory system	13	7	4	10	5	5	4	6
Other	2	1	0	-	1	1	1	2
Accidental & Violent deaths (External causes of injury and poisoning)	146	73	23	60	93	76	30	55
Deaths due to Accidents	95	48	15	40	53	44	27	52
Land Transport Accident	59	30	10	26	37	31	12	25
Other	36	18	5	14	16	13	15	26
Deaths due to Violence	49	24	8	20	38	31	3	4
Killed in Action	33	16	6	16	27	22	0	-
Died of Wounds**	14	7	2	5	10	8	2	3
Other	2	1	0	-	1	1	1	1
Suicide	2	1	0	-	2	2	0	-
Cause not currently available	4	-	1	-	2	-	1	-

*Rates have been age and gender standardised to the 2005 Armed Forces population, expressed per 100,000 strength

In addition to the numbers supplied in **Table 3, one non-regular Army personnel died whilst deployed on operations and has been classified as Died of Wounds

- In 2006, 40 deaths (21% of all cases) were caused by disease-related conditions, of which 25 were due to cancers and 13 due to circulatory system disorders.
- Deaths due to accidents and violence accounted for 146 deaths (77% of all deaths).
- In 2006, 95 deaths were caused by accidents, accounting for 50% of all deaths in the regular Armed Forces, (**Figure 3**).
- Land transport accidents were the single largest cause of death in the Armed Forces overall and within each Service with 59 deaths overall, 10 in the Naval Service, 37 in the Army and 12 in the RAF.
- In 2006, 49 deaths were due to violent causes: 33 deaths were categorised as killed in action and 14 died of wounds.
- As at 9 March 2007 there were 2 coroner confirmed suicides for deaths in 2006. However, there were also 16 deaths that occurred in 2006 for which an inquest has yet to be held. It is possible that the suicide data presented here may have to be revised when the results of the inquests are known.

Figure 3: UK regular Armed Forces: Causes of death, 2006



METHODS

- DASA receive weekly notifications of all regular Armed Forces deaths from the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Cell (formerly the single Service casualty cells). DASA also receive cause of death information from military medical sources in the single Services.
- The information on deaths presented here are for the regular Armed Forces, including all trained and untrained personnel.
- In previous publications of this Statistical Notice, Brigade of Gurkhas were excluded from rate calculations, even though they belong to the regular Army, owing to the lack of reliable data on date of birth from which to calculate mortality rates. However, DASA have received and have now been able to validate Gurkha dates of birth back to 1997. Thus Gurkhas have been included in all rate calculations in this Notice. Where trends over time have been presented, an update on previous data published has been provided in the section '**Changes to previously published data**' and annotated with an 'r' to indicate a revision has been made.
- The data here exclude the Home Service of the Royal Irish Regiment, mobilised reservists, full time reservists, Territorial Army and Naval Activated Reservists since DASA do not receive routine notifications of all deaths among reservists and non-regulars, and because reliable denominator data to produce interpretable statistics are lacking.
- The Naval Service includes both the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines.
- In order to compare time trends and to take into account the different age and gender structures of their respective strengths, rates have been age and gender standardised. In order to facilitate comparisons with previously published reports data has been standardised to the 2005 Armed Forces population.
- Due to the introduction of a new Personnel Administration System for the RAF and Naval Services, all RAF and Naval Service data for 2006 is provisional and subject to review.
- The effects of standardisation may, on occasion, lead to unexpected results particularly where small numbers are involved. For example, in 2005, the Army age and gender-standardised mortality rate had increased compared to 2004 despite a reduction in the actual number of deaths. Where several years' data are presented rates may fluctuate from one year to the next owing to the small number of cases involved and to relative changes in strengths, although effects of the latter are less noticeable. Standardised rates can also be strongly influenced by variations in the age and gender structure of the deaths concerned, even when totals may remain the same.
- To record information on cause and circumstances of death, DASA uses the World Health Organisation's International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Health-related Problems 10th revision (ICD-10). In addition, DASA also record the casualty reporting categories used by the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Cell, used for reporting to the Chain of Command and for notifying the next of kin.
- DASA have included the Joint Casualty Compassionate Cell categories of killed in action and died of wounds which together provide information on the number of Service personnel who have died on operations as a result of hostile action. The term 'killed in action' is used when a battle casualty has died outright or as a result of injuries before reaching a medical facility, whilst 'died of wounds' refers to battle casualties who died of wounds or other injuries after reaching a medical treatment facility.
- Following recent concerns, DASA now regularly check all deaths for information on coroner's verdicts (England & Wales) and the results of investigations by the Procurator Fiscal for Scotland where possible. For Northern Ireland, DASA liaise with the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) who handle the official information on behalf of the Northern Ireland Office. In this report, for sake of brevity we have labelled all these sources of information as 'coroner's verdicts'. There is an obligation for all accidental deaths and those resulting from violent action to be referred to these officials. Inquests are usually held within a few months of the death, but occasionally a few years may elapse. Therefore some recent deaths may not have clearly defined cause information. Where this is the case deaths were included with accidental deaths in **Table 3**.

CHANGES IN PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED DATA

- Following a validation exercise by DASA Army, DASA now have reliable dates of birth for individuals in the Brigade of Gurkhas (from 1997 to current date). In line with National Statistics protocols, DASA's previously published data have been reviewed.
- Following an internal validation exercise DASA have been able to update some cause of death data previously reported as cause not currently available and a number of deaths were coroners inquests have been completed and given suicide or open verdicts.
- **Tables 3a-3e** provide the details of the amended cause of death information for 2001-2005, as presented in **Table 3** for 2006.

Table 3a: Deaths in the regular Armed Forces: Causes by Service, numbers and rates*, 2001

Cause	All		Naval Service		Army		RAF	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
All	142	r 70	33	79	80	r 73	29	49
Disease related conditions	40	20	12	28	16	15	12	16
Cancers	24	12	7	17	7	8	10	13
Diseases of the circulatory system	9	4	2	5	5	4	2	3
Other	7	3	3	6	4	r 3	0	-
Accidental & Violent deaths	100	49	20	49	63	56	17	33
(External causes of injury and poisoning)								
Deaths due to Accidents	80	39	18	44	47	43	15	29
Land Transport Accident	48	r 24	11	27	29	r 26	8	18
Other	r 32	16	7	17	r 18	17	7	11
Deaths due to Violence	5	2	0	-	5	4	0	-
Killed in Action	r 2	1	0	-	r 2	2	0	-
Died of Wounds	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Other	3	1	0	-	3	3	0	-
Suicide	r 15	7	r 2	5	11	8	2	4
Cause not currently available	r 2	-	r 1	-	1	-	0	-

*Rates have been standardised to the 2005 Armed Forces population; rates expressed as per 100,000 strength

'r' indicates a change in previously published data to reflect the inclusion of deaths to personnel in the Brigade of Gurkhas or where cause of death information has been changed, see below.

- Amendments to rates reflect the incorporation of data for the Brigade of Gurkhas
- Two Army deaths originally reported as 'other accidents' have been amended to 'Killed In Action'
- One death Naval Service death previously reported as 'cause not available' has now been given a 'suicide' verdict

Table 3b: Deaths in the regular Armed Forces: Causes by Service, numbers and rates*, 2002

Cause	All		Naval Service		Army		RAF	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
All	147	r 72	26	66	94	r 85	27	52
Disease related conditions	40	21	9	24	21	25	10	14
Cancers	19	10	5	12	10	12	4	5
Diseases of the circulatory system	r 18	9	3	8	r 10	12	5	8
Other	3	2	1	4	1	1	1	1
Accidental & Violent deaths	107	51	17	42	73	60	17	38
(External causes of injury and poisoning)								
Deaths due to Accidents	90	43	13	32	60	48	17	38
Land Transport Accident	65	31	7	17	45	36	13	29
Other	25	12	6	15	15	r 12	4	9
Deaths due to Violence	3	1	0	-	3	2	0	-
Killed in Action	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Died of Wounds	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Other	3	1	0	-	3	2	0	-
Suicide	14	7	4	10	10	9	0	-
Cause not currently available	r 0	-	0	-	r 0	-	0	-

*Rates have been standardised to the 2005 Armed Forces population; rates expressed as per 100,000 strength

'r' indicates a change in previously published data to reflect the inclusion of deaths to personnel in the Brigade of Gurkhas or where cause of death information has been changed, see below.

- Amendments to rates reflect the incorporation of data for the Brigade of Gurkhas
- One death in the Army originally classified as 'cause not available' has been amended to 'disease of circulatory system'

Table 3c: Deaths in the regular Armed Forces: Causes by Service, numbers and rates*, 2003

Cause	All		Naval Service		Army		RAF	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
All	173	r 83	37	90	97	r 79	39	74
Disease related conditions	39	19	7	17	18	18	14	21
Cancers	18	r 8	3	7	7	r 6	8	10
Diseases of the circulatory system	r 14	r 7	r 4	9	r 4	r 4	6	10
Other	r 7	r 4	0	-	r 7	r 8	0	-
Accidental & Violent Deaths	133	64	30	73	78	63	25	53
(External causes of injury and poisoning)								
Deaths due to Accidents	69	33	13	32	40	32	16	32
Land Transport Accidents	49	24	10	24	28	23	11	21
Other	r 20	10	r 3	7	12	9	5	11
Deaths due to Violence	40	19	14	34	23	19	3	7
Killed In Action	37	18	14	34	21	18	2	3
Died of Wounds	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Other	3	1	0	-	2	2	1	3
Suicide	r 24	11	r 3	8	r 15	12	6	14
Cause not currently available	r 1	-	r 0	-	r 1	-	0	-

*Rates have been standardised to the 2005 Armed Forces population; rates expressed as per 100,000 strength

'r' indicates a change in previously published data to reflect the inclusion of deaths to personnel in the Brigade of Gurkhas, or where cause of death information has been changed, see below.

- Amendments to rates reflect the incorporation of data for the Brigade of Gurkhas
- One Naval Service death originally classified as 'other accident' has been given a 'suicide' verdict
- One Army death originally classified as 'cause not available' has been given a 'suicide' verdict
- One Naval Service and one Army death originally classified as 'cause not available' have been amended to 'disease of the circulatory system'
- One Army death originally classified as 'cause not available' has been amended to 'other disease'
- In addition to the numbers supplied in **Table 3c**, 4 non-regular Army personnel died whilst deployed on operations: 2 have been classified as 'Killed in Action', and two have been classified as 'other accidents'

Table 3d: Deaths in the regular Armed Forces: Causes by Service, numbers and rates*, 2004

Cause	All		Naval Service		Army		RAF	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
All	169	r 82	37	92	95	r 81	37	61
Disease related conditions	43	22	19	45	7	6	17	22
Cancers	r 22	11	r 9	21	3	3	10	13
Diseases of the circulatory system	18	9	8	19	4	3	6	7
Other	r 3	1	r 2	6	0	-	1	1
Accidental & Violent Deaths	125	r 60	18	47	88	73	19	38
(External causes of injury and poisoning)								
Deaths due to Accidents	90	43	15	39	58	48	17	34
Land Transport Accidents	r 59	28	9	25	r 41	33	9	19
Other	r 31	15	r 6	14	r 17	r 15	8	15
Deaths due to Violence	16	8	1	3	15	12	0	-
Killed In Action	10	5	0	-	10	8	0	-
Died of Wounds	r 0	-	0	-	r 0	-	0	-
Other	r 6	3	1	3	r 5	r 2	0	-
Suicide	r 19	9	r 2	5	r 15	13	2	3
Cause not currently available	r 1	-	r 0	-	r 0	-	1	-

*Rates have been standardised to the 2005 Armed Forces population; rates expressed as per 100,000 strength

'r' indicates a change in previously published data to reflect the inclusion of deaths to personnel in the Brigade of Gurkhas or where cause of death information has been changed, see below.

- Amendments to rates reflect the incorporation of data for the Brigade of Gurkhas
- Five Army deaths originally classified as 'died of wounds' have been amended to 2 'land transport accidents', 2 'other accidents' and 1 'other violent'
- One Naval Service and two Army deaths originally classified as 'other accident' have been given 'suicide' verdict

- Two Naval Service deaths originally classified as 'cause not available' have been amended to 'cancers' and 'other diseases'
- In addition to the numbers supplied in **Table 3d**, 1 non-regular Army personnel died whilst deployed on operations, the death has been classified as 'Killed in Action'

Table 3e: Deaths in the regular Armed Forces: Causes by Service, numbers and rates*, 2005

Cause	All		Naval Service		Army		RAF	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
All	158	79	27	69	91	83	40	71
Disease-related conditions	43	22	9	24	17	18	17	28
Cancers	23	12	4	12	7	8	12	20
Diseases of the circulatory system	15	8	r 4	10	7	8	4	6
Other	5	3	1	2	3	3	1	1
Accidental & Violent Deaths	113	57	18	45	73	64	22	42
(External causes of injury and poisoning)								
Deaths due to Accidents	73	37	12	31	51	46	10	21
Land Transport Accident	52	26	7	17	37	r 32	8	18
Other	r 21	11	r 5	14	r 14	13	2	3
Deaths due to Violence	22	11	1	3	12	10	9	15
Killed in Action	19	10	0	-	r 10	8	9	15
Died of Wounds	2	1	0	-	r 2	2	0	-
Other	1	1	1	3	r 0	-	0	-
Suicide	r 18	9	r 5	12	r 10	8	r 3	6
Cause not currently available	2	-	r 0	-	1	-	r 1	-

*Rates have been standardised to the 2005 Armed Forces population; rates expressed as per 100,000 strength

'r' indicates a change in previously published data to reflect the inclusion of deaths to personnel in the Brigade of Gurkhas or where cause of death information has been changed, see below.

- Amendments to rates reflect the incorporation of data for the Brigade of Gurkhas
- Three Naval Service and five Army deaths originally classified as 'other accident' have been given 'suicide' verdicts
- One RAF death originally classified as 'cause not available' has been given a 'suicide' verdict
- One Army death originally classified as 'died of wounds' has been amended to 'other accident'
- One Army death originally classified as 'other violent' has been amended to 'Killed in Action'
- Two Naval Service deaths originally classified as 'cause not available' have been amended to 'other accident' and one 'circulatory disease'
- In addition to the numbers supplied in **Table 3e**, one non-regular Army personnel died whilst deployed on operations and has been given a 'suicide' verdict.